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ABSTRACT

Bilingual education is not entirely a new idea. In the 18th and 19th centuries it was practiced in church schools, particularly in German and Spanish. Most communities, however, assumed a strongly assimilationist stance for their public schools, especially after World War I. In recent years, however, this attitude has been partly reversed under the impact of the concept of cultural pluralism and a growing ethnic awareness. The greatest impetus to bilingual education was given by the Bilingual Education Act of 1968. That law defined this area of teaching as the "use of two languages as mediums of instruction." Its design may be transitional, maintenance, restorationist, or culturally pluralistic. The last is exemplified by Miami's Coral Way School in which Spanish-speaking Cuban refugee children effectively learned English and their English-speaking peers learned Spanish. This school's success, the funding provided by the Bilingual Education Act mentioned above, and favorable court decisions help explain the movement's rapid progress in the recent past. Research on the subject has led to several definitive conclusions, but they are relatively few in number. The future of this area of education will be determined by its success in actual practice and in the ebb and flow of social and political influences. (Author)

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BILINGUAL EDUCATION: AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME

For more than a century, teaching in English—and only English—was a main route to cultural assimilation. Recent legislation and court decisions foster bilingual education, partly as an expedient way to help kids learn better. It may also pave the way for cultural pluralism.

by
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Bilingual Education: An Idea Whose Time Has Come

For several years a new movement in American education has been gaining momentum—an effort to establish bilingual education, not only in New York City, but wherever non-English-speaking children attend public schools. As late as 1970, it was actually illegal to teach a subject matter course in a foreign language in the city's public schools. That year, however, a state law *permitting* bilingual education was enacted. Four years later a court order *mandated* it. This decree was based partly on a 1974 Supreme Court ruling that non-English-speaking Chinese children who were instructed in English in the San Francisco public schools did not enjoy equality of treatment, for "students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education" (*Lau v. Nichols*). Later in 1974 a court order called the "Aspira Consent Decree" ushered in a vast new program of bilingual education in this city's schools for pupils of Hispanic origin, who comprise a substantial proportion of the school population. Instruction in a bilingual setting, prohibited by law a scant half dozen years ago, is now required for thousands of pupils.

Bilingual Education in the United States

Bilingual education is not a new concept. Before the rise of public school education in the nineteenth century, for example, sectarian instruction in German (often excluding English) was common throughout Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and the Carolinas. Even after the advent of public education in Pennsylvania, an 1837 state law permitted teaching in German on an equal basis with English. In Ohio, an 1838 law allowed German-English instruction in districts with large German populations. About the same time, a Wisconsin district allotted a third of its funds for texts printed in German.

When the United States reached its present Southwestern continental limits after the Mexican War, Spanish-speaking children in the newly acquired territories were originally accommodated in schools in which instruction was conducted in Spanish. In California, for example, almost a fifth of all education was conducted in Spanish in state supported Catholic schools. In New Mexico, the language of instruction, even in the public schools, was predominantly Spanish.

At about the same time, Oklahoma's Cherokee Indians developed a written language and established an educational system which produced a literacy rate of 90 percent in their native language. Their bilingual teaching was so effective that the Oklahoma Cherokees had a higher literacy rate in English than the white populations of Texas and Arkansas.

Paralleling these undertakings was a contemporary experiment in bilingual education in New York City, starting in 1837, following a wave of Irish and German immigration. At that time the city's public schools were administered by a private association called the "Public Education Society." The Irish immigrants, of course, spoke English, but new German arrivals faced a language problem. Responding to this need, the Public Education Society established an ele-

mentary school exclusively for Germans, so that they might be taught in English for a maximum of one year by a teacher who understood German.

Bilingual education has always been influenced by prevailing American attitudes towards foreigners and the languages they spoke. For over a century after the War of Independence, a major American goal was to create a national identity patterned after the country's rulers, then English-speaking Anglo-Saxons. As millions of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe poured in at the turn of the last century, however, this approach was partly replaced by the "melting pot" doctrine, an attempt to amalgamate and assimilate the various immigrant groups into a new, distinctly American race of man.

World War I produced a period of extreme nationalism, highly unfavorable to "hyphenated" Americans and their respective languages and cultures. The reverse held true after World War II. As we shall see, the latter set the stage, first for greater tolerance of other cultures, then for a recognition of the benefits of cultural diversity.

These changing attitudes helped shape bilingual education in this country. In 1838, for example, a committee of the Public Education Society appraised New York's German bilingual schools. The committee found that pupils were so happy in a German-speaking milieu that they remained there (violating the Society's rules) even after meeting the prescribed standards for speaking English. Many, however, did not master English as readily as their peers who attended conventional American schools. The committee also suggested that segregated schooling retarded assimilation into contemporary Anglo-American society, while "German children who mingled promiscuously in other schools lost all trace of nationality." Accordingly, the Society required a more rigid enforcement of the one-year enrollment rule and eliminated all but its primary grades. In 1842, the association refused to institute a comparable school for newly arrived Italian children. They closed the German school forever in 1850. Meanwhile, the state legislature had created a genuinely public Board of Education (giving New York both a public and private system of public education for a decade). In 1847 this body established evening schools, with the heaviest enrollment in "English for foreigners" classes. Almost a century afterwards, comparable classes achieved literary fame in *The Education of H*Y*M*A*N K*A*P*L*A*N.*

The "melting pot" concept produced strenuous efforts to develop methods of teaching "English to foreigners" and promote speedier assimilation, particularly in the years preceding World War I. The war, however, which engendered widespread hostility towards aliens, elicited legislation restricting the medium of instruction to English in thirty-four states, New York included. In some, in fact, an instructor who taught in a foreign language risked the loss of his license, or even criminal penalties. These measures did not apply to the study of foreign language by English-speaking students, but even that study lost favor. Although the public high school population of the United States rose from 1,300,000 in 1915 to 5,400,000 in 1948, enrollment in German language classes dropped from 324,000 (25 percent) to 43,000 (less than 1 percent).

Changing Attitudes toward Bilingualism

During the past few decades, American attitudes towards the non-English-speaking have gradually altered, shifting from a single-language, single-culture standard toward a greater understanding of cultural heterogeneity. Here is what a resource unit recently distributed to teachers in the New York City schools stated:

> The concept of the "melting pot" where each culture of the immigrant was tossed into the cauldron to create the "great American dream" is changing to a concept of forging together a giant mosaic of each ethnic culture delineated and brilliantly etched into the American monumental design.

Recognition of ethnic diversity has been based partly on the spectacular growth of self-awareness, self-assertion, and pride evinced by ethnic groups themselves. For example, in the 1970 edition of *Beyond the Melting Pot,* Glazer and Moynihan observed that blacks have become a distinctive group, developing their own "history, defined interests, and identifiable styles in social life, culture and politics." Other groups have also rejected complete assimilation in favor of distinctive group identity and status. "Ethnicity has evolved into a political idea, a mobilizing principle, and an effective means of advancing group interest," report Glazer and Moynihan.

Rising Ethic Awareness among New York's Puerto Ricans

As among other ethnic groups, a heightened ethnic awareness has emerged among New York's Puerto Ricans, whose numbers include the city's largest non-English-speaking group. Endeavoring to maintain their identity, many mainland Puerto Ricans have laid great stress on retaining their language and customs.

Greater ethnic self-awareness however, does not fully account for a Puerto Rican's attachment to his Hispanic cultural heritage and language; unique external circumstances have also contributed. As with other Hispanic newcomers, recently arrived Puerto Ricans are likely to continue speaking Spanish, since the use of a familiar tongue helps reduce culture shock caused by contact with an unfamiliar environment. Sometimes, however, they continue to rely on Spanish longer than other Hispanic newcomers.

Environmental as well as political influences have helped produce this effect. Initially Puerto Rican neighborhoods in New York were islands, in seas of other groups. But mass migrations, like those in the years preceding World War I, greatly expanded these neighborhoods. Then they fused, creating vast geographical blocs of Puerto Ricans. Inhabitants of *barrios* like these found less opportunity and less motivation to master English. Furthermore, thousands of

Puerto Ricans shuttle back and forth between the island and the mainland. They must remain fluent in Spanish in order to communicate with family and friends in Puerto Rico. Although bilingualism is accepted in the schools of Puerto Rico, language loyalty has become a political issue. Puerto Rican *independentistas* have emphasized the use of Spanish as essential to their feelings of self-worth.

As education in Puerto Rico has improved, the island's migrants have become more exacting in their educational demands. When the island was first annexed by the United States, less than a quarter of its inhabitants were literate. Great progress was made under "Operation Bootstrap," a government sponsored effort to promote Puerto Rico's economy and raise its educational system to higher levels. In recent years, school enrollments have increased; part-time instruction has been drastically reduced, especially in rural areas; and pupil attrition rates have declined. Having experienced improvements in their own educational system, the islanders have become more knowledgeable about the benefits of bilingual education, which many now regard as a priority.

The Development of Sociolinguistics

In recent years, social scientists have noted the tenacious survival of subnationalities in our society over the generations. In recognition of this phenomenon, these social scientists have advocated a view of cultural pluralism that recognizes the importance of the unique cultural milieu associated with each immigrant group. This doctrine underlies the philosophy of bilingual-bicultural education.

Interest in the concept of ethnic pluralism has led to inquiries into the status of non-English languages among minority groups and the role of bilingualism in our society. These inquiries are now conducted under the rubric of "sociolinguistics," the sociology of language.

One of the pioneers in developing sociolinguistics has been Professor Joshua Fishman. Some of his major observations about cultural pluralism and bilingual education in the United States are summarized below.

1. English is recognized as the "common language of American unity and the basic language of American culture, government, and education for all Americans."

2. It is no longer necessary to insist on the exclusive use of English to prevent "Balkanization" because a "common pattern of commitment and participation in American political processes has . . . become fully established among almost all subgroups within our society."

3. Groups like the Croats in Yugoslavia, Bretons in France, and Basques in Spain breed possibilities of political and social cleav-

ages. We may avoid perils of this kind by encouraging cultural pluralism, not cultural separation, and by fostering it on a voluntary basis rather than officially maintaining ethnic groups as "separate, monolingual, non-English-speaking" units.

4. We should strive to preserve migrants' mother tongues while they learn English, for those languages are important for our external relations. Since becoming a leading world power, we have discovered the need for competence in non-English languages: vast sums are being spent to insure the teaching of foreign languages. If bilinguals' native languages are allowed to atrophy, a precious national resource will be dissipated.

5. Under these safeguards, a commitment to a culturally pluralistic society may preserve a varied pool of languages. We should not merely tolerate cultural diversity, but recognize "honestly pursued cross-cultural understanding" as invaluable for the preservation of our language resources.

By offering an ideology and an intellectual climate favoring the concept of bilingualism, sociolinguistics has contributed significantly to the recent renaissance of interest in and support for bilingual education.

The Bilingual Act of 1968

Contemporary bilingual education received its greatest impetus from the Federal Bilingual Act of 1968. Experimentation in this area preceded the enactment of this measure, however, for over a decade.

A pioneer test, the "Puerto Rican Study," was conducted by the New York City Board of Education between 1953 and 1957. This project attempted to discover how to improve the education of non-English-speaking Puerto Rican children. The investigators cited a Philippine experiment which suggested that instruction in the child's mother tongue in the initial year and the *subsequent* introduction of Tagalog, the national language, might promote his mastery of Tagalog. Accordingly, Dr. Carmen Sanguinetti, an educator and researcher who was a native of Puerto Rico, organized a program for teaching junior high school science to Spanish-speaking children. The results were so favorable that the "Puerto Rican Study" recommended the extension of Spanish instruction to additional subject areas and other grade levels.

The case for bilingual instruction was considerably strengthened by an apparently successful elementary school program initiated in Dade County, Florida, in 1963 for refugees from Cuba. The "Coral Way School," as it was called, offered a novel curriculum: half the time was spent in Spanish and half in English, thereby encouraging Spanish-speaking pupils to master English and vice

versa.[1] In succeeding years, comparable projects were instituted in San Antonio, Texas, and at the Navajo Rough Rock School, in Arizona. Subsequently, these experiments had a pronounced national influence on bilingual education.

A valuable project, based on a sound research design, was conducted in the New York City's public schools between 1964 and 1967. It grew partly out of a recognition by the Board of Education of the special needs of Puerto Rican children and partly out of the pleas of concerned Puerto Rican groups for fulfillment of those needs. The direct inspiration was a bilingual school established by the Puerto Rican Department of Education in Bayamón, for children who began their schooling in New York, but migrated to Puerto Rico, knowing no Spanish. This suggested reversing the process, that is, establishing classes for non-English-speaking Puerto Rican children in New York. As a result, the Board of Education launched a second project for teaching junior high school in Spanish.[2]

The findings of this study were that pupil achievement rose in science and Spanish, but not in social studies and mathematics; the experimentals surpassed the control group in reading English, but did no better in classroom work in Language Arts; bilingually taught pupils tended to use Spanish more frequently than the controls, earned superior ratings in effort and reliability, and experienced a diminution of anxiety.

One of the study's most important outcomes was the identification of conditions most likely to promote the success of a bilingual program: a school whose pupils consist chiefly of recent arrivals; teacher fluency in Spanish and a well-knit staff; an orientation program for community, school staff and pupils; teachers and parents receptive to bilingual education; curriculum materials appropriate to pupils' needs; and, pupils sufficiently fluent in Spanish to benefit by instruction in it.

The federal government's first substantial funding of public education resulted from the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). Originally, this piece of legislation contained no provisions for bilingual education; consequently, very few projects of this nature were supported by federal money. When delegates from scores of school districts appeared before the House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor in 1967, for example, they reported on the use of federal funds in their respective communities. Only one local board (Albuquerque, N.M.) testified that it had devoted a portion of its federal monies to bilingual education.

Public support for bilingual education, however, was not lacking. In

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[1] Comparable programs are conducted in Greek and Hebrew day schools as well as in Chinese "after-school" programs. Institutions of this kind, however, are not "two-way" schools: children from different backgrounds do not impart their respective languages and cultures to each other. As we shall see below, the purpose is really language "maintenance" or "restoration."

[2] This study, entitled *Science Instruction in Spanish for Pupils of Spanish Speaking Background*, was conducted by Dr. Arnold D. Raisner, Dr. Philip A. Bolger, and Dr. Carmen Sanguinetti.

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the Southwest, for example, Chicanos returning from World War II had organized veterans' associations which initiated educational improvement campaigns to sensitize school systems to non-English-speaking childrens' needs. Organizations like the Puerto Rican Forum and Aspira campaigned in New York for comparable goals. When they petitioned Congress for federal aid, these groups secured favorable responses from members in states such as Texas, New York, and California, which had large Spanish-speaking populations. Texas' Senator Ralph W. Yarborough, introduced an amendment to ESEA, co-sponsored by Senator Jacob Javits of New York, which was eventually enacted as the Bilingual Education Law. Congressman James Scheuer of New York introduced the House version.

The Bilingual Education Act (officially known as Title VII of the ESEA of 1965), signed by President Johnson in 1968, offered aid to local education agencies which initiated "forward-looking" bilingual education programs to resolve the learning problems of children with limited English-speaking ability. Funds were available for planning, staff training, assembling teaching materials and equipment, and operating bilingual as well as bicultural programs (imparting knowledge of the history and culture associated with pupils' languages), promoting closer home-school relationships, educating adults, increasing school holding power, and offering vocational courses.

The enactment of this measure was a turning point for American bilingual education. The U.S. Office of Education began to fund projects in which the use of a child's "mother tongue other than English" was recognized as the "medium of instruction before the child's command of English was sufficient to carry the whole load of his education." Then, in 1972, Massachusetts passed a "Transitional Bilingual Education Act," requiring bilingual instruction in all school districts with twenty or more pupils of limited English-speaking ability in any given language. By 1975, fourteen other states had enacted mandatory legislation in this area: others, permissive legislation. Many states also repealed their laws prohibiting the use of any language but English for purposes of instruction, among them New York State. By 1974, bilingual programs served more than 100,000 pupils across the nation.

The public schools of New York City were among the first to establish programs under Title VII. The city's original bilingual school was opened in 1968, the year the Bilingual Act became law. This school had a well-integrated program of instruction, teacher-training projects, parent participation, and curriculum development. The children were largely Hispanic; the remainder, English-speaking. It was partly a "two-way" school, balancing Spanish dominant pupils learning English with monolingual speakers learning Spanish. The school aroused great enthusiasm among its pupils, parents, and teachers, and discipline problems dropped to the vanishing point. When parents were given the option of sending their children to another school, 98 percent chose to have them stay. (Almost all the remainder had migrated to Puerto Rico.) Then, in 1969 a second bilingual school, P.S. 211, was established in a converted Bronx factory. Half the children were Hispanic and half English-speaking, and bilingual instruction was

more individualized than in P.S. 25, with non-graded grouping, open corridor classes, and small cluster groups advancing at their own pace.

Three years later, the Office of Bilingual Education was established as a central unit at the Board of Education to coordinate bilingual instruction in the city's schools. This office is now responsible for the development and implementation of bilingual and English-as-a-second-language programs,[3] the preparation and dissemination of bilingual classroom materials, research practices and information (through its Cross-Cultural Training and Resource Center), and the preparation and training of teachers and para-professionals in the rationale and methodology of bilingual/bicultural education.

The legislation and programs outlined above have produced a new approach to teaching non-English-speaking students. The national Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages asserts that the perspective of American educators has changed from a "rejection of other languages to an acceptance of them as valuable national resources and as valid and even necessary mediums for instruction."

What is Bilingual Education?

If a dozen specialists in the area were asked this question, they might offer a dozen different responses. In the absence of consensus, it might be useful to refer to the U.S. Office of Education's guidelines for bilingual education programs.

> Bilingual education is instruction in two languages and the use of *two languages* as mediums of instruction for any part of the school curriculum. Study of the history and culture associated with a student's mother tongue is considered an integral part of *bilingual education.* [Italics in original]

Many variations in the design of bilingual education programs may be found among the nation's school systems. How may the several types be classified? A useful *schema* was developed by Professor Josué M. González, Director of Chicago State University's Institute for Bicultural Education.

> 1. *English as a Second Language/Bilingual* (Transitional) This type has a strictly remedial orientation. As the title suggests, the emphasis is on learning English as quickly as possible, with the child's native language limited to small segments of time, if any.

[3] The English-as-a-second-language approach to instructing non-English-speaking pupils attempts to help them acquire fluency in English by mastering its grammar and sound systems. "ESL," as it is called, was introduced into the city's school system in 1967, and it spread to many schools. Advocates of bilingual education accept it as a useful tool, and it will be retained under the Aspira Consent Decree (discussed below). They maintain, however, that it is too narrow in scope to satisfy the needs of the target pupil population fully.

2. *Bilingual Maintenance.* The mother tongue is used more extensively for subject matter courses. Pupils' fluency with another language is regarded as a personal and national asset, to be retained and developed.

3. *Bilingual/Bicultural Maintenance.* This type resembles "bilingual maintenance," but adds curricular offerings in the history and culture of the pupils' ethnic-linguistic group.

4. *Bilingual/Bicultural Restorationist.* This is similar to the two previous types, but seeks to renew the language and culture of the pupils' ancestors, even if they lost it through assimilation.

5. *Culturally Pluralistic.* This is comparable to the previous type, but it encompasses *all* the school's pupils. They develop fluency in each other's language, history, and culture.

The last approach is partly exemplified by Miami's famous Coral Way School in which Spanish was the language of instruction for half a day; English, for the remainder. As a result, Cuban pupils effectively learned English and English-speaking pupils Spanish.

The cooperative efforts of the French government and the State of Louisiana to revive the use of the French language offer an example of the "restorationist" type. The former sends *coopérants* to Louisiana for this purpose.[1]

On a nationwide basis, the overwhelming majority of bilingual programs fall into two categories, transitional or bilingual maintenance, and most of these are transitional. Professor Joseph P. Fitzpatrick, Dean of Fordham University's School of Sociology, has offered one reason:

> The values which were expressed in the [Congressional] hearings on Bilingualism [1967] and which eventually prevailed, are not those which stress the teaching of Spanish for the preservation of a culture, but as an instrument for learning English more effectively, and for more rapid assimilation to American life.

Professor González, who devised the five classifications presented above, expressed a similar viewpoint: "Title VII functionally promotes the use of other languages only as a means to the end of learning English, after which the use of the native idiom is not recommended."

In other words, the concepts of cultural pluralism were overshad-

[1] *Coopérants* are young Frenchmen who perform non-military duties in certain countries outside France during their respective periods of military service, an arrangement that bears some resemblance to our Peace Corps.

owed in the hearings and in the substantive content of the Bilingual Education Act by more immediately utilitarian goals. Accordingly, the "special education needs" of "children with limited English ability" (words Congress used) were portrayed in terms that emphasized the remedial aspects of bilingual education. Arguments like the following were presented at the Congressional hearings:

> The non-English-speaking child requires special instruction with educational methods different from those employed for native English speakers. His greatest problem is frequently the language barrier. Many a Spanish-speaking child, for example, becomes bewildered when he enters a school in which the medium of instruction is English.
>
> Facing these handicaps, many non-English-speaking pupils fall behind. Massive retardation in such critical skills as reading and arithmetic, coupled with a high attrition rate, helps place Puerto Ricans among the city's lowest achieving pupils.
>
> In the past, dropouts could readily find "muscle" jobs, requiring relatively little academic training. Such opportunities, however, have greatly diminished. Accordingly, poor scholastic achievement may beget serious occupational problems.
>
> Advocates of bilingual education suggest that the youngster's mother tongue is the best initial medium of instruction. Following the principle of proceeding from the known to the unknown, it is pedagogically sound to begin schooling by communicating with a child in the language he knows best.
>
> Students must master subject matter courses in junior and senior high schools without delay, lest they fall behind in their studies. Accordingly, instruction in their native tongues may be essential at these school levels.
>
> Research in bilingual education abroad suggests that it may offer promise of improved academic proficiency. A highly controlled experiment with Indian pupils in Chiapas, Mexico, for example, showed that an experimental group instructed in reading first in their own languages later performed better in reading Spanish than a control group taught originally in Spanish. Wallace Lambert, a specialist in the social psychology of bilingualism at McGill University, found that when matched groups of bilinguals and monolinguals were subjected to I.Q. tests, the bilinguals did at least as well as their peers and had the advantage of learning a second language as well.

> Accumulating evidence from bilingual experiments suggests that bilingual education may engender better personal adjustment than conventional types of education among non-English-speaking pupils. Observers of bilingual projects have noted a relatively tranquil atmosphere in the bilingual classes they have visited. One reason may be that the child no longer believes his language and culture are being rejected. Accordingly, bilingual education enhances his self-confidence and self-esteem.
>
> When school children learn the community's dominant language and their parents do not, a distressing reversal of roles may occur, leading to tension and strain between the generations. The child who achieves academic success, including the mastery of English, may reject his parents as well as his native language and culture. A less assimilative type of pupil, unable to meet academic standards, may become alienated from his parents and the "Anglo" world alike. Subsequently, anti-social attitudes and behavior may develop. A. Bruce Gaarder, an authority on bilingual education, believes it helps "establish a mutually supporting relationship between home and school."

Professor González has offered the following observations about these arguments:

> Most of the testimony and opinion which gave spirit to the law was based on a remedial/compensatory mode of minority group education. In essence what it suggested was that temporary use of the native language would help remediate or compensate for childhood rearing practices and experiences which were deemed inadequate in preparing the child for learning in a *regular* instructional program. The use of Spanish was thus perceived as an unfortunate necessity rather than an opportunity for enrichment. The ultimate aim, of course, was to move children *out* of functional bilingualism and into monoglot instruction.

When bilingual education is regarded merely as a compensatory program for disadvantaged pupils unfamiliar with the county's *lingua franca*, instruction in the area will probably be limited to transitional programs.

Legislation and Court Decisions

During the past few years the strongest impetus for bilingual education has come from the United States Congress and state legislatures. In the Bilingual Education Act of 1974, for example, Congress authorized federal funding through 1978 and supplemented the original act with new features, such as bilingual vocational training, adult education programs, and teacher training fel-

lowships. At the same time, an ever-increasing number of states has enacted mandatory or permissive legislation for bilingual instruction.

Bilingual education, however, has not been the exclusive province of legislatures. In recent years, the federal courts have also become increasingly active in this area. National organizations and local community groups have engaged public interest law firms to bring legal actions related to bilingual education.

Since the landmark case of *Brown vs. the Board of Education* (1954), judicial decisions relating to school desegregation have involved federal courts in internal school operations to a hitherto unparalleled degree. Those courts have greatly expanded the scope of their rulings in this area, with decisions on such matters as the ethnic composition of individual schools, "tracking" (homogeneous pupil grouping), and "magnet schools" (schools attracting highly qualified students). In the Boston school desegregation case, *Morgan vs. Hennigan* (1974), a federal court has also reviewed school districting, feeder patterns, pupil transfer policies, and the recruitment, selection, and assignment of teachers. Moreover, they assumed the right to review district-wide plans for desegregation and to choose from the plans submitted by plaintiffs and boards of education. Rulings of this kind created precedents upon which the courts drew in cases related to bilingual education.

Lau v. Nichols (1974) is the seminal case in bilingual education. In this case, the Supreme Court ruled that San Francisco discriminated against non-English-speaking Chinese students, although they received the same education as native children, because their classroom experiences were "wholly incomprehensible and in no way meaningful." The court offered no remedy, but asked the local board of education to "apply its expertise" to "rectify the situation." In a Denver case, *Keyes v. School District No. 1* (1974), the courts went further and recognized a program devised by the plaintiffs, while a New Mexico case, *Serna v. Portales Municipal Schools* (1974), resulted in a federal court's fashioning its own plan.

In 1972, Aspira, Inc., an association dedicated to helping mainland Puerto Ricans, initiated a class action to secure bilingual education for all Hispanic children in the city's schools whom it might benefit. Eventually the Board of Education and the plaintiff reached an agreement, promulgated in a consent decree by a district court in August, 1974. In order to implement this decree, the school system agreed to:

1. fashion a comprehensive plan for implementation;
2. develop tests to identify and classify Spanish-speaking children of limited English language ability;
3. maintain "English as a Second Language" instruction;
4. reinforce and develop their knowledge of Spanish;

5. offer Spanish dominant pupils instruction in various subject areas (such as science, mathematics, and social studies) in Spanish;

6. disseminate "Minimum Educational Standards," explaining the consent decree and offering specific recommendations for implementation;

7. undertake an extensive campaign to retrain existing staff, establish new bilingual licenses, recruit new teachers, and select them by examination;

8. designate pilot schools to offer demonstrations, train other schools' staffs, and disseminate their experiences during the spring of 1975; and,

9. expand the program in September, 1975, to reach all Spanish-dominant pupils (except those whose parents preferred not to have them participate).

As we have seen, the federal courts may respond to demands for bilingual education in a variety of ways. Whatever the future course the federal courts may take, the decisions outlined above appear to have established viability of the courts as change agents for instituting education in a bilingual setting.

Problems Unresolved by Research

Research on bilingualism is voluminous, not only in the realm of education, but also in the areas of sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics. However, the practical applications of its findings to specific school situations are limited by the diversity of the populations studied and by the difficulties encountered in isolating the experimental variables. For example, it will be recalled that Miami's Coral Way experiment proved so successful among Cuban emigrés in Florida that it helped spark the drive for bilingual education among the nation's indigenous Spanish-speaking groups. A recent article, however, in the *Review of Educational Research*, the official journal of the prestigious American Education Research Association, reveals that this school's pupil population was atypical. The children's group scores on the Otis Intelligence test, for example, were at the 89th percentile and the school could recruit trained teachers among the Cuban emigrés of relatively high socioeconomic status. This contrasts markedly with the non-middle class situation in which many Chicano and Puerto Rican children find themselves. It is interesting to note that when poorer Spanish-speaking pupils were recently admitted to the school, academic achievement declined. It is generally recognized that socioeconomic conditions and family attitudes substantially affect academic achievement.

On a larger scale, research findings on bilingual instruction sometimes appear to be mutually contradictory because the human and social elements cannot readily be replicated, and the studies are not fully comparable. For example, a worldwide survey of twenty-six bilingual experiments, reported to the 1975 annual convention of the American Educational Research Association, disclosed the following:

1. Ten studies suggested that it is preferable to start with the pupil's dominant (native) language, then to proceed to the national language.
2. Ten suggested the reverse: that it is preferable to start with the national language, then to reinforce the native language.
3. Six studies suggested that the two languages be taught simultaneously

A number of explanations demonstrate the difficulty in reconciling the results of these experiments. To begin with, student characteristics in bilingual programs are not always comparable, as long-term observations of the Coral Way School suggest. Frequently, instructional programs and curricular programs are dissimilar. The "context" or "situational" variables may differ. For example, two ethnolinguistic groups may exhibit drastically different "socio-structural incentives." Finally, measuring instruments vary from experiment to experiment, even when the same aspect of pupil performance is being measured. It is evident that no quick and simple answers to research problems in this area will be readily forthcoming.

Some Other Unresolved Problems

Apart from research findings that preclude reaching firm conclusions, bilingual education remains an area beset with difficulties and unresolved problems. A few are briefly outlined below.

Funding. Until the present time, most bilingual education programs have been supported by federal funds. This leads to a doubly unsatisfactory situation. Since federal grants are regarded as "soft money," a school's bilingual instructional program is often viewed as transitional, and its effect on the conventional curriculum tends to be minimal. Again, when the federal grant has expired, the program may atrophy.

Implementation. As a nascent endeavor, bilingual education is fraught with barriers to full implementation. Professor González has pointed up "numerous issues and problem areas," such as alternative instructional design, evaluation models, adequate training provisions and curriculum materials, as well as related psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic nuances yet to be properly researched.

Materials of Instruction. When bilingual programs were originally established, materials of instruction were scarce. Appreciable progress has been made in this vital area, but considerably more teaching aids must be developed before all needs are fully satisfied.

Staff Needs. Perhaps the most serious obstacle to successful implementation of bilingual programs is an acute staff shortage. Administrators who seek teachers and supervisors with the requisite pedagogical know-how, linguistic knowledge, and sensitivity to their pupils' cultures usually experience considerable difficulty. Recruitment of bilingual personnel in New York, where the majority of non-English-speaking children speak Spanish, has naturally focused on persons of Hispanic origin, especially Puerto Ricans. The pool of available Puerto Rican adults is relatively small, since most Puerto Rican New Yorkers are on the young side. In November, 1974, in fact, Columbia University's Bureau of Applied Social Research revealed that the average mainland born individual of Puerto Rican origin was nine years old.[5] "This does not mean that only Puerto Rican teachers can educate Puerto Rican students," declares Hernán LaFontaine, Executive Administrator of the Board of Education's Office of Bilingual Education. "However, teachers who are not bicultural by birth should make themselves bicultural by experience." Mr. LaFontaine has also warned that the success of bilingual education depends largely on a professional staff that enjoys a high level of linguistic and teaching skills as well as personal values.

Pupil Accounting. Methods used to identify non-English-speaking children do not always fulfill the purposes for which they were designed. This is partly due to the absence of uniform methods of counting and classifying pupils. Differing criteria for identifying non-English-speaking pupils and for establishing categories to designate varying degrees of ability in English or in foreign languages also pose formidable obstacles for the researcher who seeks to gather and interpret data on pupils' current language status.

Parental Attitudes. The parents of pupils already receiving bilingual instruction in New York generally appear to accept the respective programs in which their children are enrolled. The Puerto Rican community (whose children comprise the overwhelming majority of the Hispanic enrollment in the city's schools) offers "wide support and desire for the establishment of bilingual programs," according to Hernán LaFontaine.[6] One reason for the Puerto Ricans' enthusiasm for bilingualism is the fact that for many, their language and culture

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[5] To compensate for its staff shortage, the New York City Board of Education has provided crash courses, after school and during the summer months, for personnel interested in learning Spanish. An intensive recruitment campaign has also been carried on in Puerto Rico. In addition, three institutions of higher learning—Fordham, Lehman College, and New York University—have instituted training courses for bilingual teachers. Also, a Bilingual Counselor Consortium, consisting of the City University of New York, the Catholic University of Puerto Rico, the Inter-American University of Puerto Rico, and the University of Puerto Rico, was organized by Dr. Amelia Ashe, Associate Professor at Richmond College, and directed by her before she became a member of the New York City Board of Education.

[6] In 1966, an exploration of community opinion organized by Joshua Fishman showed that 72 percent of the Puerto Ricans surveyed in New York City considered the preservation of their ethnic mother tongue a matter of "high necessity." Only 57 percent of the Spanish-speaking respondents in San Antonio offered the same opinion. Joshua Fishman *et al.*, ***Language Loyalty in the United States*** (Mouton and Co., 1966), p. 194.

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have become symbols of Puerto Rican group identity. "It is not enough simply to say that [Puerto Ricans] should be given the opportunity to share in the positive benefits of American life," Mr. LaFontaine declared recently. He pointed out that this sharing should not be accomplished at the sacrifice of those traits which make Puerto Ricans uniquely what they are.

The most emphatic backing of bilingualism has been manifested by newly arrived Puerto Rican migrants, as the junior high school bilingual science experiment described above indicated. On the other hand, some resistance to the court order has been encountered among certain groups of Hispanic parents, such as natives of Cuba and South America. Parents in Community School District 30, which embraces parts of Long Island City, Jackson Heights, Elmhurst, and Corona, instituted a lawsuit, after the Aspira Consent Decree was promulgated, to place enrollment in bilingual programs on a voluntary basis, that is, to leave the decision in the parents' hands. Their action was successful. As a result, pupils eligible for the program may be excluded if their parents initiate requests to achieve this purpose.

The attitude of those who wish to vacate the consent decree is to reject "umbilicalism," as they term an excessive attachment to their native lands. Apparently they question the value of retaining ties with the old country with "one foot here and one foot home." Instead they opt for total immersion in American society, believing that their children will be more rapidly assimilated if school courses are taught in English. Accordingly, school administrators may be caught in crossfire between parents who want their children to remain in bilingual programs for many years and those who prefer "crash" programs for mastering English. The prevailing opinion, however, is clearly in support of bilingualism.

Desegregation. Since *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), the case that launched American school systems on the road toward desegregation, unusual efforts have been made to promote pupil integration. A program of bilingual instruction, however, tends to isolate the target population into separate classes, thereby raising the spectre of ethnic segregation.

Present Status of Bilingual Education in New York

"Nothing in this world is as powerful as an idea whose time has come." Some regard this Victor Hugo maxim as currently relevant to the status of bilingual education in New York City. The Aspira decree, for example, has conferred upon any non-English-speaking child of Hispanic origin in a public school an opportunity to be taught in a language he can understand—*as a matter of right*. Immense efforts are now under way within the school system to implement that decree. What is more, its benefits will not be confined to Spanish-speaking pupils: they will also be extended to pupils of limited English ability who speak Chinese, French, Greek, Italian, and other languages.[7]

Language loyalists have been encouraged by these developments, which recognize the legitimacy of bilingual/bicultural education and expand its

scope. They point out, however, the transitional character of the present program, which implies that it is merely a steppingstone towards mastering English rather than a means of preserving and reinforcing the native language and culture. This does not mean that programs conducted in bilingual settings in the city's schools need be exclusively transitional in nature. As we have seen, several schools have already introduced elements of cultural pluralism at the time they established bilingual instruction. Others are at liberty to follow their example. Except for centrally controlled groups, like the high schools, the decisions in these matters will be made locally, that is, by individual schools and districts.

Quo Vadis?

What will be the future shape of bilingual education? Obviously that future will be considerably affected by the results of bilingual programs currently in operation. To achieve their objectives, administrators must overcome problems in recruiting and training staff, developing curricula and materials of instruction, and establishing appropriate standards for bilingual pupils. The most important determinant, of course, will be pupil achievement in learning English and maintaining the mother tongue as well as grasping the subject matter taught in the native languages.

Equally important to the future of bilingual education will be the influence of social and political forces that lie beyond the schools. They include the extent of federal funding for bilingual education as well as programmatic guidelines for fundable projects; future migration and immigration patterns; political movements, such as the drive for independence in Puerto Rico; the attitudes of ethno-language groups towards acculturation and assimilation in the dominant culture; future court decisions and legislation; pressures exerted by community and parent groups; and future research and development in the fields of sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics.

The future of bilingual education in this country will depend, in some measure, on the ebb and flow of the political and social forces noted above. Needless to say, these forces will operate most strongly where there are concentrations of people from different ethnic backgrounds who value their unique cultural identities and demand the preservation (or restoration) of their languages. Bilingual and bicultural education is likely to flourish in its most developed form in the nation's largest metropolitan centers, New York City chief among them, because of their rich ethnic diversity.

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[1] The federal government may supplement programs instituted by the Board of Education. Last summer, for example, Stephen R. Aiello, a member of the Board of Education, announced a federal commitment of $700,000 for an Italian bilingual program involving 220 high school students over a five-year period.

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